MARVEL COMICS PRESENTS™
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MIDNIGHT SONS
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146
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MARVEL COMICS PRESENTS

GHOST RIDER

Steve Lightle — COVER
Richard Ashford — EDITOR
Michael Kraiger — ASSISTANT EDITOR
Tom DeFalco — EDITOR IN CHIEF

pg.

GHOST RIDER.....1
SIEGE OF DARKNESS
PART 14
"MASK"

Ghost Rider and Seer find, and return to the Nightclub with an injured Caretaker....?

Writer — CHRIS COOPER
Breakdowns — REGGIE JONES
Finishes — FRED HARPER
Letterer — UL HIGGINS
Colorist — JOE ANDREANI

pg.

DEVIL SLAYER.....9
SIEGE OF DARKNESS
PART 14
"TEMPTATION"

Eric Simon Payne hoping to escape the demons that plague him, seeks the guidence of his old friend Dr. Strange. Amongst the ruins of Dr.. Stange's mansion The Devil Slayer searches for an answer, confronting Lillin demons and those of a more personal nature.

Writer — JON BABCOCK
Pencils — DARREN AUCK
Inks — SCOTT KOBLISH
Letterer — JON BABCOCK
Colorist — KRAIG MICHAELS

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MARVEL READERS PRESENT

c/o Marvel Comics Group
387 Park Avenue South, New York, NY 10016

Attention Correspondents: All letters to be considered for publication must include your name and address though we will withhold that info by request!

Dear Richard,

It's been a while since my last letter to MCP, and the most recent issue with the Midnight Sons seemed like a good excuse to write in again. I enjoyed this issue quite a bit, especially since there was no Wolverine story. Don't get me wrong; I like Wolverine, but he's already too overexposed as it is. Taking a break from him may be just what this title needs right now. The Scarlet Witch story was pretty good, although the art could have been better. It looked a bit rushed. With AVENGERS WEST COAST about to be cancelled, Wanda may be out of action for a while. Thus, it was good seeing her here.

The Devil Slayer story was odd. I still can't decide if I liked it or not. I liked seeing Simon Payne again, though. He'd fit right in with the Midnight Sons family, as this story demonstrated. Darren's artwork heightened the scripting, so maybe I enjoyed it after all.

The Ghost Rider story seemed pointless. It wasn't bad, mind you. I just didn't see the point of diverting GR, Blaze and Vengeance when they returned to Doctor Strange's side a few pages later. It may have been better to focus on another group of Midnight Sons, or some other character that would fit into this storyline. Chris Cooper's writing saved what could have been a disaster.

The Werewolf story was far and away the best this issue. Len Kaminski once again proves that he can write good horror stories. James Fry's art enhanced the story brilliantly. I like seeing Jack Russel once again in the spotlight after a too-long absence. Why doesn't someone give this guy his own book again?

Maybe it's time to change the format of this title. I've had enough of seeing Wolverine and Ghost Rider every issue. Maybe devoting this series to other families of titles would freshen things up. Or better yet, go back to the format the book had at its start. What I'd really like to see are characters that don't appear in fifty books a month. You owe it to your readers to expose lesser known characters. Please consider this.

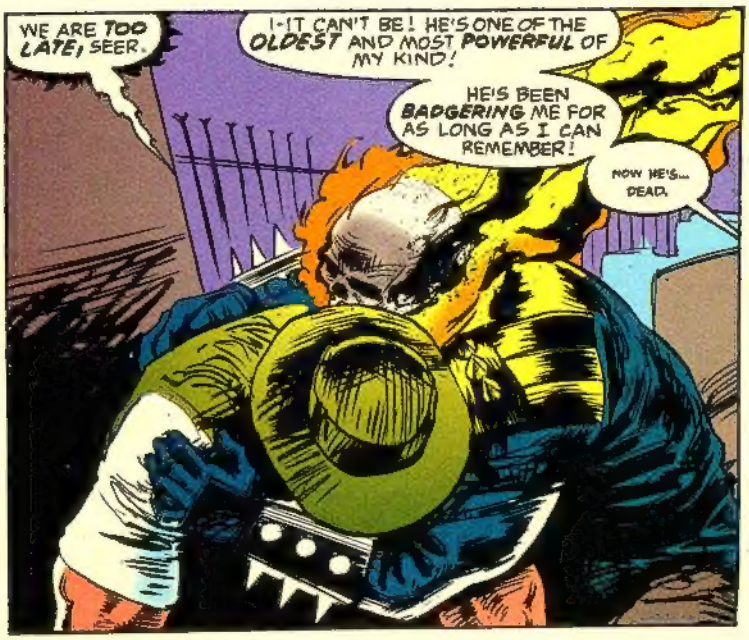
Joe Christiano
35 Coach Drive
Waterbury, CT 06708

Wanda will be back in action in the Scarlet Witch Limited Series, available at comic book stores everywhere right about now.

Your suggestion for using this book to highlight different "families" within the Marvel Universe, is a good one Joe. It could be a new way to look at MARVEL COMICS PRESENTS.

It seems we get quite a few comments from readers wanting to see more of obscure characters. Just remember, that you do get a chance to see them here. Spellbinder, Werewolf and unusual, difficult to describe characters like Devil-Slayer, are just a few examples.

MASKS
SIEGE OF DARKNESS, PART 14
ONCE, CYPRESS HILLS CEMETERY WAS GHOST RIDER'S HOME...
... UNTIL THE DEMON ZARATHOS CLAIMED IT FOR HIMSELF, AS HE PLANS TO DO WITH THE REST OF THE WORLD
NOW, RETURNING TO THOSE TOMBSTONES WITH THE HELP OF THE TELEPORTER, SEER...
... GHOST RIDER IS ABOUT TO LEARN WHETHER ONE OF HIS ALLIES WILL NEED A FRESH GRAVE.
CARETAKER!


WE ARE TOO LATE, SEER.
I-IT CAN'T BE! HE'S ONE OF THE OLDEST AND MOST POWERFUL OF MY KIND!
HE'S BEEN BADGERING ME FOR AS LONG AS I CAN REMEMBER!
NOW HE'S... DEAD.

GIRLIE, YOU HAVE ALWAYS BEEN TOO SENTIMENTAL.
YOU'RE ALIVE!!

NOT FOR LONG IF I HAVE TO LISTEN TO ANY MORE OF THAT DRECK.
HOW ARE THE REST OF MY PEOPLE, GHOST RIDER? HAS ZARATHOS SLAIN THE BLOOD?

TRUTHSAYER IS DEAD...
... BUT RAYDAR AND EMBYRRE HAVE JOINED OUR CAUSE AND ARE SAFE IN THE NIGHT-CLUB.

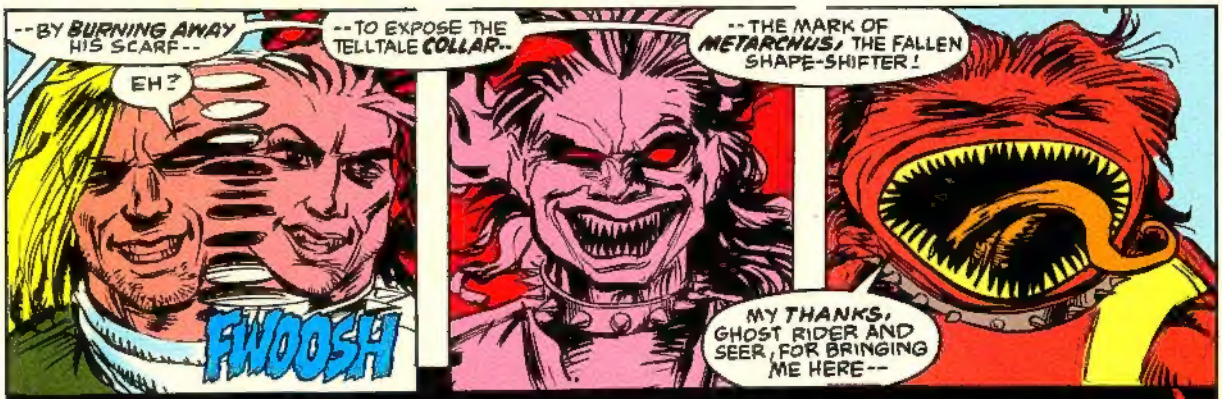
THEN TAKE ME TO 'EM.
WE CAN'T STAY HERE ANOTHER MINUTE. ONCE ZARATHOS DISCOVERS I'VE ESCAPED...

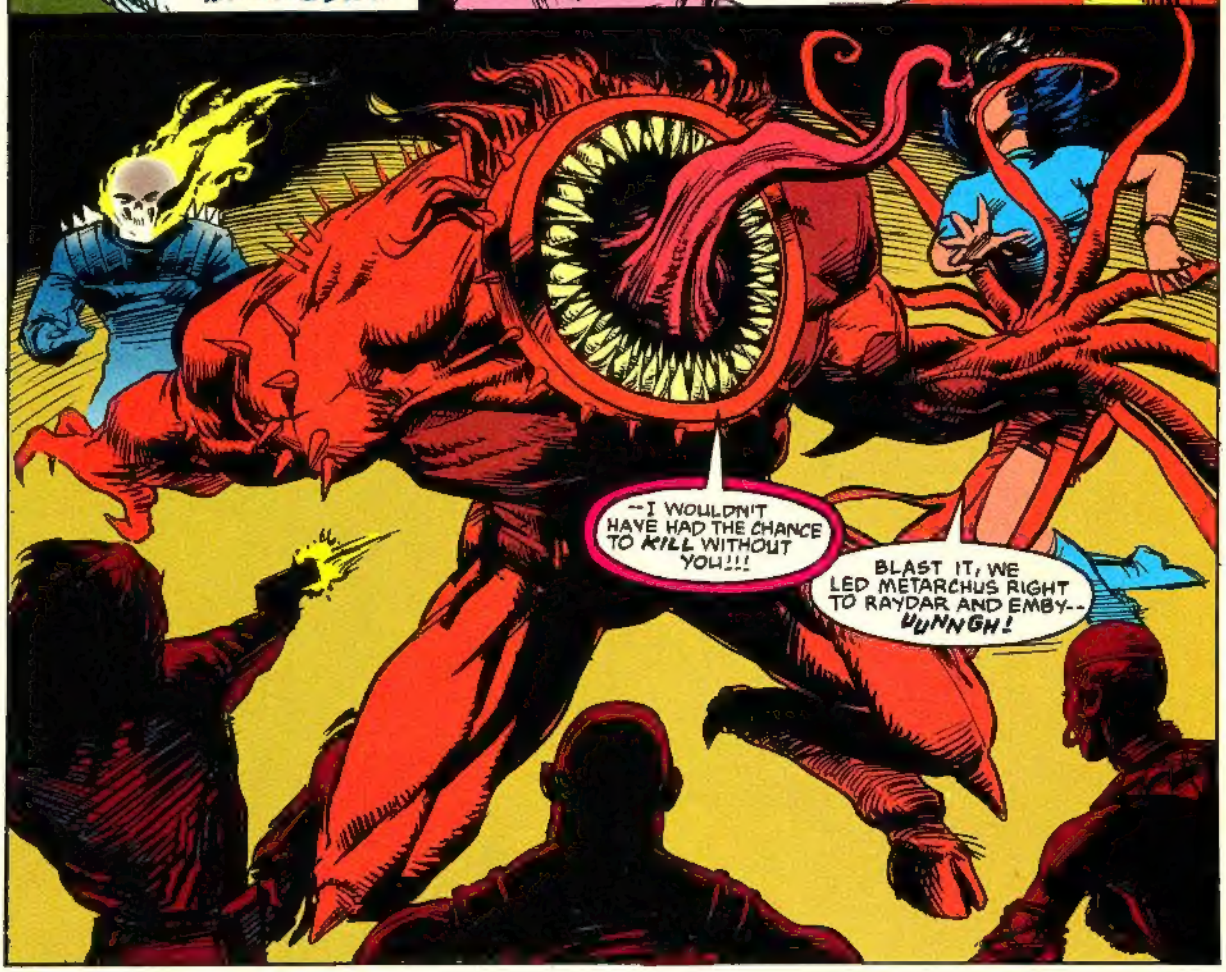
ONCE YOU DID, WHY DIDN'T YOU TRANS-PORT YOURSELF TO THE NIGHTCLUB?
ARE YOU STUPID, SEER OR BLIND? DO I LOOK LIKE I'M IN ANY CONDITION FOR THAT KIND OF STUNT?

OKAY! OKAY!
CANTANKEROUS PAIN IN MY BUTT!

THE NIGHTCLUB.
THE FIRST OF THE SCOUTING PARTIES IS RETURNING!
CAN IT BE? WITH GHOST RIDER AND SEER--
--CARETAKER!
EMBYRRE, WAIT!!
SHWOOM
GET DOWN, DAUGHTER!
WHAT?!
ARE YOU MAD, CARETAKER?
I KNOW SHE AND THE OTHER FALLEN MADE YOU SUFFER--
--BUT SHE'S ON OUR SIDE NOW!
FOOLS! YOU WILL ALL DIE!!
UNGF!

DID ZARATHOS BRAINWASH CARETAKER-- OR WORSE, CONVINCE CARETAKER TO JOIN HIM?
THAT'S NOT CARETAKER!
SEER IS RIGHT! MY FATHER SENSED THE TRUTH--
--AND MY POWER WILL REVEAL IT--


--BY BURNING AWAY HIS SCARF--
EH?
FWOOSH
--TO EXPOSE THE TELLTALE COLLAR--
--THE MARK OF METARCHUS, THE FALLEN SHAPE-SHIFTER!
MY THANKS, GHOST RIDER AND SEER, FOR BRINGING ME HERE--


--I WOULDN'T HAVE HAD THE CHANCE TO KILL WITHOUT YOU!!!
BLAST IT, WE LED METARCHUS RIGHT TO RAYDAR AND EMBY-- UUNNGH!

OUR BULLETS AREN'T DOING A BLESSED THING!
YOU'RE BRAVE, WOMAN, BUT YOU'RE HUMAN! YOU'RE NO MATCH FOR METARCHUS. GET TO SAFETY.
I'M A COP, PAL--AND I DON'T GIVE UP SO EASILY.
BLAM BLAM
BCHOOM BCHOOM
TCHINK
RAYDAR IS RIGHT, STACY!
THE LINKS OF MY CHAIN WILL PUT AN END TO THIS!
THIP THIP THIP
FOOLS!
A SHAPE-SHIFTER...
...CAN HEAL SUCH WOUNDS IN SECONDS!
THAT WAS A FATAL MISTAKE, GHOST RIDER-- FATAL TO EMBYRRE!
METARCHUS! YOU SLIMY--
HUSH, MY DEAR. COME TO ME--
--LET ME GIVE YOU A KISS!

METARCHUS, YOU WERE ALWAYS UTTERLY OBNOXIOUS--
--BUT RARELY STUPID ENOUGH TO THINK YOU COULD TOUCH ME WITHOUT GETTING BURNED.
YEEEAAARGH!
FOOSH
FWUUMPF
EH? THE FIRE IMPLODING ON ITSELF?
(S)HE MUST HAVE TRANSFORMED INTO SOMETHING TINY!
NOW WE'LL NEVER FIND HIM--HER--WHATEVER!
NOT SO! I'M A TRACKER--IN A MOMENT MY POWER WILL GIVE ME A FIX ON...
...CURSE IT ALL, I WARNED YOU TO GET TO SAFETY, WOMAN!
METARCHUS IS RIGHT BEHIND YOU!!!
TOO LATE, RAYDAR! SURRENDER TO ME OR THE WOMAN DIES!

NOW!!!
TCHINK
I WON'T LET YOU TOUCH HER, DO YOU HEAR?
THERE'S ONLY ONE WAY TO END THIS.
EMBYRRE--- BURN US BOTH!!
SO BE IT.
GHOST RIDER?
FOOSH
AA'I'EE!
TAKE... WHATEVER FORM... YOU LIKE...
MY MYSTIC CHAIN... WILL HOLD YOU FAST!
THOUGH THE FLAMES... DESTROY BOTH OF US...
I... WILL NOT... LET GO!
STACY?!?
MERELY THE FORM OF THE ONE YOU CARE FOR...

...BUT THE SHOCK LOOSENED YOUR GRIP ENOUGH TO LET ME BREAK--
--FREE!
HONEY, WE'RE HOME!
NO! NO! I'LL NOT FACE ALL OF YOU AT ONCE!
YOU MIDNIGHT SONS ARE MORE DANGEROUS THAN WE THOUGHT!
WE FALLEN WILL LEARN EVERYTHING ABOUT YOU FROM CARETAKER--
--AND THEN WE WILL DESTROY YOU!!
IT SEEMS WE RETURNED FROM OUR SCOUTING MISSIONS JUST IN TIME!
YOU MEAN, JUST TOO LATE! WE KNOW THAT CARETAKER IS STILL ALIVE!
SO WE'LL PICK UP DR. STRANGE AND THE REDEEMERS AT WHAT'S LEFT OF STRANGE'S MANSION--
--AND THEN WE RESCUE CARETAKER!
THE SIEGE CONTINUES IN DR. STRANGE #61.

WELCOME TO THE WORLD OF ERIC SIMON PAYNE, RECOVERING ALCOHOLIC. BY ITSELF, A DIFFICULT ENOUGH TASK, BUT FOR ERIC, THINGS ARE A LITTLE MORE COMPLEX.
HE WEARS A UNIQUE KIND OF CAPE KNOWN ONLY IN CERTAIN MYSTIC CIRCLES. YEARS OF TRAINING COMBINING HIS LATENT PSYCHIC ABILITIES WITH THE MAGIC OF THE CLOAK ALLOWS HIM SOME VERY SPECIAL ABILITIES.
UNFORTUNATELY, RECENT EVENTS HAVE LED HIM TO BELIEVE THAT WITHIN THE VERY FABRIC OF HIS SHADOW CLOAK MAY BE WOVEN THE SEEDS OF HIS UNDOING.
SO HE'S COME TO SEE A SPECIALIST...
...HIS FORMER ALLY AND DEFENDER, DR. STEPHEN STRANGE, MASTER OF THE MYSTIC ARTS.
SHROUDED IN MOONLIGHT, HE STANDS IN DISBELIEF ON WHAT SHOULD HAVE BEEN THE GROUND FLOOR OF THE DOCTOR'S BLEEKER STREET MANSION, ASKING:
WHAT'S GOING ON?!
THIS WAS STRANGE'S IMPENETRABLE SANCTUM-- IT'S DESTRUCTION SHOULD BE METAPHYSICALLY IMPOSSIBLE! I SHOULDN'T EVEN BE ABLE TO STAND HERE AMIDST THE RUBBLE!
DAILY BUGLE
COULD STRANGE HIMSELF HAVE BROUGHT ABOUT THE RUIN OF HIS OWN DOMICILE? TO WHAT PURPOSE?
I MUST INVESTIGATE FURTHER...
STAN LEE PRESENTS
DEVIL-SLAYER
TEMPTATION

TRUE, ANY VILLAIN WOULD VALUE THIS FORTRESS FOR THEMSELF--THIS MIGHT HAVE BEEN THE RESULT OF SOME DEADLY CONFRONTATION. PERHAPS A FAILSAFE SPELL--
THE DEVIL--!
D-D-DEVILS... DEMONS! L-LEGGO O'ME! PLEASE D-DON'T HUH-HUH-HURT M--
NO, DEVIL-SLAYER. WHAT HAS HAPPENED HERE?
...OH, NO.
TAKE COVER, MAN!
WHAA--AA!
WHERE IN--?
S. BUNCHE R.I.P.
SIDNEY FLINK

I KNOW THIS PLACE. CYPRESS HILL... WHY DID THE CLOAK BRING ME HERE-- CORY-- NO. THAT ELECTROSTATIC FLAVOR IN THE AIR-- THE DIMENSIONAL BORDERS HAVE RECENTLY BEEN BREACHED.
WHAT CONNECTION, I WONDER, HAS THIS PLACE TO DR. STRANGE'S MANSION?
KNOCK, KNOCK.
WHAT--
--WAS THAT ABOUT?!--
THE SHADOW SALOON
--AND WHERE HAS THE LITTLE DEVIL BROUGHT ME NOW?
THIS PLACE SEEMS BOTH DANGEROUS AND RELAXING AT THE SAME TIME. I WONDER...
COULD DR. STRANGE BE-- NO. I DON'T IMAGINE THIS IS HIS KIND OF HANGOUT. THIS IS MORE MY KIND OF CROWD.
HEY, HANDSOME-- NIIICE THREADS!
BLORBLSKNKYEESH

SO WHY DID THE CLOAK BRING ME HERE? IT'S NEVER ACTED ON ITS OWN LIKE THIS--
--AND I'M DEFINITELY NOT UP TO THIS RIGHT NOW-- TOO MUCH HAS BEEN HAPPENING TOO FAST--I REALLY DO NEED STRANGE'S HELP!
STILL, THERE IS A PATTERN HERE I FEEL I SHOULD RECOGNIZE ...DO I KNOW THIS PLACE?
WELL, EXCUSE ME FOR EXTRAPOLATING SO ABRUPTLY UPON YOUR INTENSIVE COGNATIVE EXCURSION, BUT IN THE INTEREST OF MAINTAINING THE PRECARIOUS ILLUSIONARY NATURE OF OUR DISCONCERTED INEBRIATE ENVIRONMENT--
--I'LL ASK YOU TO ENTER FREELY-- RELAX-- WHILST I ATTEMPT TO EXPLAIN' THE WHYS AN' THE WHEREFORES OF OUR LITTLE SCIENCE EXPERIENCE!
(WHY WE BROUGHT YA HERE, KID.)
ANYWAY, WELCOME TO RAFAEL'S SILVER CLOUD LOUNGE-- AT LEAST THE REMAINING PORTIONS-- HAVE A SEAT. IMBIBE. WE'RE ALL HARMLESS...
THANKS. I AM A BIT CONFUSED.
NOT TALL. I'M FRANK.
WOW! SLICK DRAPES, THOSE!
HERE, THIS ONE'S ON THE HOUSE, MATE!
S'ME AN' MY PALS ARE PLANNIN' TO TAKE KIND OF AN IMPROVISATORY JOURNEY THROUGH THE COSMOS-- WITH YOUR ASSISTANCE, OF COURSE..
SSSLUURP!
...SEEMS TO ME THAT NO MATTER WHERE YOU GO... THERE YOU ARE.
I DUNNO, BUT I LIKE HIM!
YEAH, WELL
YUM!
MY MAN PILGRIM TELLS ME THAT THIS HERE ROBE IS THE GENUINE ARTICLE SAYS IT CAN OPEN UP-- HEH-- CLOSED DOORS...
:HEH:
SO, UH, Y'WANNA TAK A LIL' RIDE?
GOBBLUM! GOBBLUM!
...I MUST HAVE REALLY WANTED THAT DRINK..
SO THAT'S IT. AND I LET THEM GET THAT CLOSE. IT MAY ALREADY BE TOO LATE... ONE OF THEM SEEMS TO HAVE A LINK WITH THE CLOAK.
WOW...

LOOK, UH.. I DON'T KNOW WHO YOU THINK I AM, BUT--
--I CAME HERE LOOKING FOR DR. STRANGE AND I--
--I DON'T THINK I CAN HELP YOU.
--oops!--
OKAY, OKAY, YOUR WAY WAS A WASTE, NOW IT'S MY TURN!
C'MON, PANTYWAIST, YOU AND ME-- LET'S BASH SKULLS--
--'CAUSE I'M REAL HUNGRY!
I'LL HONOR THIS CHALLENGE, TROLL, AS I APPRECIATE THE HONESTY OF YOUR APPROACH.
HEY--
--NO FAIR!
PREPARE YOURSELF, MY ENEMY, BUT BEWARE--

--THE PRIZE YOU SEEK MAY BECOME THE MEANS OF YOUR *UNDOING!*

YEAH? WELL I AIN'T GOT TOO *FAR* TO GO 'FORE I'M *UNDONE!* AN' BESIDES, NO MATTER HOW *TOUGH* YOU ARE--

--I'M BETTIN' I CAN TAKE MORE PUNISHMENT THAN *YOU!*

HARDLY. INSTEAD I THINK YOU'RE GOING TO TELL ME ABOUT *DR. STRANGE!*

HE'S *TOAST!* JUST LIKE YER GONNA BE WHEN I GET MY HANDS AROUND YER *NECK!*

"YOU STILL DON'T QUITE *UNDERSTAND,* DO YOU? THE SHADOW CLOAK IS *MORE* THAN JUST A DIMENSIONAL GATEWAY--

"--IN MY HANDS IT BECOMES THE *DEADLIEST* OF ALL COMBAT WEAPONS."

-Urrk-

YOU NEVER EVEN HAD A *CHANCE.*

GHAA-AK!

SURRENDER. OR SHALL I LEAVE PIECES OF YOU *SCATTERED* ACROSS THE ENTIRE *UNIVERSE?*

..ENOUGH..

HERE LIES YOUR FALLEN COMRADE. I TRUST THIS PROVES A *VALUABLE LESSON.* THE EARTH IS NOW AND FOREVER *OFF-LIMITS* TO YOU AND YOUR KIND!

TRESPASS, AND ANSWER TO...

DEVIL SLAYER

WOW.

YOWZA!

SO STRANGE MAY BE DEAD--AND THUS MY TROUBLES FAR FROM AN END! ALTHOUGH THE REMAINS OF HIS SANCTUM MAY HOLD SOME CLUE TO HIS FATE, I AM RAPIDLY RUNNING OUT OF TIME.
HOW LONG CAN ONE--EVEN ONE SUCH AS I-- EXPECT TO SURVIVE THIS FUGATIVE LIFE, WITH DEVILS ALWAYS AT MY HEELS?
KTINC!
LIKE ME, THE MAN I FOUND HERE EARLIER MUST HAVE WANDERED IN SEEKING SHELTER. ...FUNNY. .
.. THAT BOTH HE AND I SHOULD SEEK TWO OF THE SAME ESCAPE ROUTES--
DEMONS! DEE-MONSKURGHK--!!
Eh--?!
"cough"
FLIES AND SPIDERS! DEMONS! Ghaak:- GEDDEMOFFAMEEEE! Ooh--EEyuGH! GET 'EM AWWF--! "choke"
HIS FACE GOES SOUR WITH PITY AND NO LITTLE FEAR, FOR ANY DEVILS HERE ARE ILLUSIONARY, AND THIS MAN'S ALONE TO FIGHT. THE DEVIL-SLAYER MUST STAND AND WATCH, HELPLESS...
...FOR ERIC SIMON PAYNE CAN CERTAINLY RECOGNIZE A BOUT WITH THE DELIRIUM TREMENS!

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MACNEIL '93

MARVEL READERS PRESENT

c/o Marvel Comics Group
387 Park Avenue South, New York, NY 10016
Attention Correspondents: All letters to be considered for publication must include your name and address though we will withhold that info by request!

Dear Richard and Michael,

It's time once again for the review of the latest issue of MCP, #141:

Ghost Rider cover: Ghost Rider laying slouched in a throne of bones seems out of place with the character. Actually, it looked rather silly. Nice coloring though. Grade: B+.

Wolverine cover: This one was very well done. Having Logan in a swamp seems to be the perfect setting. This was a nice piece of moody artwork. Grade: A+.

"Fellow Travelers" Part 5: Army of Darkness? Does Sam Raimi know about this? Seriously, this chapter maintained the quality that has been evident throughout most of the story so far. The artwork was extremely well rendered, and the story quite good. Grade A+.

"Rumble in the Jungle" Part 5: Also an interesting penultimate chapter. Chris Marrinan does some great work, and I'd love to see his stuff appear in these pages again. My only complaint is his creatures bore too close a resemblance to H.R. Giger's now famous designs for the movie Alien. I think Chris could have probably come up with a more unique look for them. Grade: A.

Iron Fist: Please, no more of this guy! It isn't that I don't like the character, because I do. It's just that, ever since "Book of Changes" ended, all we've seen are a series of rather badly plotted Iron Fist stories which mostly consist of pointless fight scenes that do nothing to develop the character. "House of Rave" is perhaps the worst of these. Meister Rave is the most inane villain I've ever come across in comics. The fight between him and Fist was totally moronic. Artwise, Robert Davis had some interesting layouts, but he has got to get some lessons in basic anatomy. As for the ending line, "No one is innocent, you're just a party pooper," that's just plain idiotic. I'm sorry, but this is one of the worst stories to ever appear in MCP. Grade: D.

"Spellbound" Part 4: This was an interesting chapter, and it was a fun read. The art is very good, and, storywise, this serial has improved immensely since the first couple of chapters. I'm certainly looking forward to next issue's wrap-up. Grade: B+.

Overall grade: B+. By the way, since Conan's regular title has just been canceled, how about giving him a six-part story in these pages? That'd really give this comic some variety.

And to end this letter, "Comic Critique with Joey and Ben?" Sounds like an interesting idea. If I get any offers from any cable channels to produce it, you two guys will be the first to know.

Ben Herman
45 Runyon Place
Scarsdale, NY10583.

Don't wait for offers, Ben, get out there and produce it yourself. What's public access for anyway?

And how about it, Conan fans? Do you want to see him in these pages? Let's hear from everyone out there. We know you're out there.

Give us some specifics. Do you like what's happening here with the Midnight Sons Crossover?

Give us one specific thing you like, one specific thing you don't like, and a suggestion for future issues of what you'd most like to see in the pages of MCP.

DR. STRANGE

Colin Macneil — COVER
Richard Ashford — EDITOR
Michael Kraiger — ASSISTANT EDITOR
Tom DeFalco — EDITOR IN CHIEF

pg.
DR. STRANGE 1
SIEGE OF DARKNESS
Part 14
"SALOME'S DREAM"

Strange encounters begin with Nightmare serving up dreams from behind the bar of the Nightclub. Dr. Strange enters and joins the dance of Salome's dream.

Writer —DAVID QUINN
Artist — GEOFF ISHERWOOD
Letterer — UL HIGGINS
Colorist —FREDDY MENDEZ

pg.
NIGHTSTALKERS 9
SIEGE OF DARKNESS
Part 14
"ASHES"
PART 2 OF 2

Trapped in the catacombs beneath Cypress Hills Cemetery, Frank Drake is "MEAT" for the People of the Dust!

Writer — STEVEN GRANT
Artist — LAWRENCE BROWN
Letterer — UL HIGGINS
Colors — CHRISTIE SCHEELE

Look for the next terrorizing part of the SIEGE OF DARKNESS [part 15] in Dr. Strange #61!

MY SANCTUM LIES IN SMOLDERING RUINS... AND I FIND THE NIGHTCLUB, OUR ONLY OTHER HAVEN, AS STILL AS A TOMB. OR IS IT?
THE PSYCHIC ASSAULTS* I'VE BEEN SUFFERING CONSTRAIN ME TO DOUBT MY EVERY MOVE, MY EVERY THOUGHT!
I MUST FIND CARE-TAKER -- MY MIDNIGHT SONS NEED A GUIDE IF I SUCCUMB TO THIS DEMENTIA!
SALOME'S DREAM
BUT TO COMPLETE MY TRIANGULATING ALGORITHM OF FINDING I NEED ANOTHER WHO KNOWS CARETAKER!
WILL THIS ARCANE PLACE ITSELF SUBSTITUTE FOR A THIRD MIND IN THE EQUATION?
* SEE DOCTOR STRANGE #60 AND MORBIUS #16 -- RICHARD
WHAT? THERE WAS NO ONE THERE!
WHAT'LL IT BE, BABY-- IN VINO, VERITAS?
"IN VINE, THE TRUTH"... BUT IN DREAMS? LIP FOR GRABS!

NIGHTMARE! YOUR DISGUISES ARE LOSING THEIR INSPIRATION!
DOCTOR STRANGE HAS NO TIME TO AMUSE YOU, FEAR LORD!
PLEASE, STEPHEN-- SAVE THE ACT FOR THE PAYING CUSTOMERS... I HAVE BUT A HEARTBEAT'S SPAN TO CAUTION YOU!
BELIEVE ME, I DID NOT MEAN TO LET HER GO THIS FAR--
WHO?
STAY AWAKE, STRANGE! SHE CAN'T PERSUADE YOU IF YOU STAY--
BY THE UNBENDING VISHANTI! I MISTOOK NIGHTMARE FOR MY TRUE ADVERSARY WHEN "SHE" WARNED ME OF A GREATER DANGER THAN "HER" OWN LIES!
YES, THIS PRETTY NIGHT-THING MERELY PLAYED MESSENGER. OPEN YOUR EYES AND LOOK UPON YOUR BETTER, STEPHEN STRANGE!

SALOMÉ, DANCING SHAPER OF PROFOUND ELEMENTAL FORCE! SALOMÉ, DREAD MISTRESS OF DESTRUCTIVE REBIRTH!
OUR BODIES CANNOT MEET--NOT YET--BUT OUR DREAMS INTERMINGLE!
YES, YOU DREAM, MY DEAR, OF PHOEBETOR IT MAY BE A MINOR EDDY IN NIGHTMARE'S FLOW--
--BUT PROCURED EQUITABLY FROM THAT PALE PUPPET WHO STIRS YOU TO DEFEND HIM.
AND IN MY DREAMSCAPE, I HAVE THE CREATIVE EDGE. KNOW, PRETENDER TO THE MYSTIC ARTS, THAT SALOMÉ IS OVERJOYED TO DISPORT WITH YOU AGAIN! ON YOUR FEET BEFORE YOUR MISTRESS!
IRRECOVERABLE MADNESS! NIGHTMARE--I HAVE NEVER ENCOUNTERED THIS CREATURE...
...NOT IN ANY STATE OF CONSCIOUSNESS!

SALOMÉ'S ASSAULT, HER DANCE, SEEMS COMPOSED OF ALL FOUR ELEMENTAL FORCES--
OH, YOU'VE NEVER IMPRESSED FORGETFULNESS ON YOUR VICTIMS, I SUPPOSE?
I HAVE NO "VICTIMS"!
THAT'S NOT WHAT I HEAR FROM IMEI.
--THEIR NATURAL CHAOS FOCUSED BY POWERFUL NEGATIVE EMOTIONS--
--SUCH AS EVOKED BY GOADING ME WITH IMEI'S DEATH!
THE FIRST 366 TIMES WE DREAMT TOGETHER, I DISTILLED PERFUME FROM YOUR BONE MARROW-- BUT THE THRILL OF OBLITERATING YOU WANES.
WHEN THE MOOD STRIKES ME, HOWEVER, I PERMEATE YOUR SKULL WITH BLACK, MOSSY FUNGUS-- AND RIDE YOU LIKE MY LITTLE BEAST.
WHY, FOR A MAMMAL...
I CAN REGROW YOU, BUT DID YOU KNOW THAT YOU DEFY... TRANSFORMATION?
...YOU ARE NOT WITHOUT CHARM.
ARRGHH
HURGH
ARGH
THERE ARE ELEMENTAL FORCES, MAN, WE COULD ONLY SUMMON IN UNION. I TRUST I NEED NOT ELABORATE?

SHE BELIEVES WE ARE REPEATING THIS ENDGAME! BUT I HAVEN'T A GLIMMER OF DEJA VU!
NO! ONE FAMILIARITY NAGS... WHERE HAVE I ENCOUNTERED THIS ENERGY, SALOME'S DANCE? WHERE?
AHHH! TILL I ACCESS YOUR WORLD, RECLAIM MY OWN DIMENSION, WE SHALL HAVE TO SATISFY OURSELVES HERE, IN NIGHTMARE'S IMAGINATION.
HE DOTES ON YOU, IN HIS OWN SICK WAY.
HOW ELSE COULD I TRICK HIM INTO GAMBLING AWAY THIS DREAMSPACE?
FOOL, I AM THE ONLY ONE WHO REMEMBERS THE DREAM OF PHOEBETOR EACH TIME... HE ALWAYS FORGETS THAT.
YOU MUST AWAKEN... TRIED TO WARN YOU...
STRANGE, I'M SORRY!

WITH A THOUGHT I PITCH HIS OWN DREAM INTO A VACUUM WHERE NO DREAMS FLOW, NOT EVEN DREAMS OF NOTHINGNESS!
AAAIEEE
I NEVER TIRE OF HEARING HIM SHRIEK!

I DEFY YOU, SALOME-- RELEASE NIGHTMARE! YOU WANT MY WORLD?
THEN YOUR CONFLICT IS WITH ME!

IN THE END, I USUALLY ALLOW YOU TO BURN YOURSELF OUT, LIKE A STAR IMPLODING TO A RESOLUTE SINGULARITY. IT IS ONLY A DREAM FOR NOW--
--BUT VERY SOON, I SHALL HAVE MY DUEL TO THE DEATH!
SORCERER SUPREME...
THAT'S IT! I MUST PRESERVE THIS MEMORY
I AM NOT MAD, BUT BESIEGED FROM WITHIN BY MY OWN DREAMS!
NIGHTMARE, YOU'VE MANAGED BETTER CABARET IN THE PAST--THIS HUMBLE DISCIPLE OF THE MYSTIC ARTS KNOWS THAT THE DREAD SALOMÉ COULD NEVER BE DISTRACTED BY BASE ENVY!
SO, UNLESS YOU'D LIKE TO HELP ME FIND CARETAKER, I'LL TAKE MY LEAVE OF YOU AND YOUR BALLERINA!
INSECT!
YOU SCORN SALOMÉ, MIGHTIEST ENEMY OF THE BLOOD?!
THE BLOOD...
...IS CARETAKER'S RACE!
NO! YOU WILL NOT EXPLOIT ME OR MY ELEMENTAL PERSUASION! FORGET!

FORGET!
CARETAKER, MY ALGORITH CONNECTS US PSYCHICALLY!
I AM OVERHAULING OUR STRATEGIES DRASTICALLY!
WHAT? WHERE YOU RUNNIN' OFF TO THIS TIME?
WE MUST RALLY AT THE MANSION RUINS--
NO! YOU MUST STEER GHOST RIDER AND BLAZE, NOW!
DON'T WORRY ABOUT ME!
YOU WILL SEE ME FOR THE FIRST TIME... AGAIN, STRANGE. HAHAHA..
...AND WHEN I REJOIN WITH THE EARTH TO REMAKE THE ENTIRE BIOSPHERE--
STRANGE!
--THE ELEMENTS WILL PLAY MY OWN SYMPHONY!
WAKE UP, STRANGE!
YOU'LL HAVE NAUGHT TO OPPOSE MY DIVINE WORKS-- ONLY I HOLD THE SECRET OF--
FORGET AS BIDDEN, STRANGE, BUT AWAKEN, MEMORY, WHEN YOU SEE SALOME DANCE!

I SAID, WAKE UP!
DO ME A FAVOR, STEPHEN. YOU'RE SCARED, TOTALLY LOST, FINE!
JUST ACT LIKE YOU KNOW WHAT YOU'RE DOING! HOW DO YOU THINK I FEEL?
WHO COULD PULL ME UNDER QUICKER THAN I WOULD HABITUALLY ERECT GUARD UPON MY DREAMSTATE?
CURIOUS... EVEN THE PAIN, THE... LOSS... FADES.
NEVER MIND THAT..
I HAVE, UH, WE HAVE.. BIGGER PROBLEMS RIGHT NOW.*
*CHECK OUT DARKHOLD #16 AND DOCTOR STRANGE #61!--RICHARD
YES... WE MUST RETURN TO--
OH, MY GOD--YOUR MANSION!
IT'S GLOWING WITH THAT FIRE YOU SPOUTED WHEN YOU LOST IT! STOP DOING IT, DOC!
MS. MONTESI.
I CAN NO LONGER TRUST MY MAGICK OR MY SENSES.
BUT I CAN TELL YOU--
--I AM NOT THE CAUSE OF THESE VIOLENT ELEMENTAL OUTBURSTS, BUT THE KEY TO ENDING THEM!
YOU SEE, EVEN IN OUR DREAMS, WE ARE BESIEGED.
CONTINUED THIS MONTH IN DOCTOR STRANGE!

NIGHTSTALKERS
ASHES
STRANDED IN THE CATACOMBS UNDER CYPRESS HILLS CEMETERY* IN THE MIDST OF THE BATTLE AGAINST THE FALLEN, FRANK DRAKE AND BLADE OF THE NIGHTSTALKERS FIND THEMSELVES FACING A CHILLINGLY DIFFERENT FOE
I SWEAR, FRANKY--I CAN'T LEAVE YOU ALONE FOR A SECOND!
YEAH, LIKE THIS WAS MY IDEA! THEY CAME OUT OF THE WALLS, BLADE!
THEY DIDN'T EVEN KNOW I WAS HERE!
THEY SURE KNOW NOW!
*SEE NIGHTSTALKERS #15 AND OTHER MIDNIGHT SONS TITLES. - Referential Richard

OW! WHAT THE--?!
GET OFF ME!
IF I'M RIGHT, IT'S BEEN TENS OF THOUSANDS OF YEARS SINCE THEY'VE EATEN!
THEY'RE NOT IN MUCH OF A MOOD TO WAIT!
THEY'RE JUST GOING TO HAVE TO, AREN'T THEY?!
YOU SHOW ME YOUR TEETH, MONSTER, I'LL SHOW YOU MINE! GUESS WHOSE ARE SHARPER?!
WANT A MOSH? GO TO A DELI LIKE EVERYONE ELSE!
MOVE IT-- WHILE THEY'RE CONFUSED! IT'S LIKE THEY NEVER HAD ANYONE FIGHT BACK BEFORE!
SOMETHING LIKE THAT! MY LEG'S BROKEN, BLADE--BETTER LEAVE ME!
KNOCK OFF THE MARTYR ROUTINE, FRANKY. IT'S GETTING ON MY NERVES!

MIND TELLING ME WHAT IS CHEWING ON ME?
SOME ANCIENT RACE CARE-TAKER IMPRISONED, NEAR AS I CAN TELL. THEY CONSIDER HUMAN FLESH A DELICACY.
DUST PEOPLE, THEY CALL THEMSELVES.
YOU'RE TELLING ME THIS CARETAKER CHARACTER IS ANCIENT?
I WAS JUST SAYING.
FOR ALL I KNOW, IT'S SOME JOB PASSED DOWN FROM GENERATION TO GENERATION.
ANYWAY, WHATEVER'S UP WITH HIM, THEY'VE BEEN SET FREE. THEY'RE LOOKING TO PICK UP WHERE THEY LEFT OFF.
THEY VIEW THE WORLD AS A LIVESTOCK RANCH.
FRANK! BLADE!
WHAT WAS THAT?!
WAK
BLADE!

THERE IS NO RUNNING-- NO ESCAPE!
WE MOVE THROUGH EARTH--AND THAT OF EARTH--AS YOU MOVE THROUGH AIR!
NOTHING LIVES, BUT IT IS OUR PREY, OUR MEAT!
FRANK!
YES... YES... I KNOW WHAT TO DO...
STUPID MAN! HE SURRENDERS HIS WEAPON-- AND HIS LIFE!
TEAR THEM APART!
STOP! DON'T YOU SEE!
FRAASH
HE HAS DESTROYED US.

THE SAINTS! THE SAINTS!
NO! HOW CAN THIS BE?!
THE CARETAKER IS GONE! HIS WILL NO LONGER HOLDS SWAY HERE!
WHAT ARE THESE CREATURES?!
WE CANNOT RETURN TO THE DUST AGAIN! NO! NOT TO THE DEATH OF AGES!
HAVE MERCYyyy--
GET AWAY FROM ME-- WHATEVER YOU ARE...
WHAT ARE YOU AFRAID OF, FRANK?

I TOLD YOU TO STAY AWAY! WHAT ARE YOU?!
THIS IS OUR HOME, FRANK. WHERE WE WERE BURIED.
YOU'RE GHOSTS!
SOME WOULD CALL US SAINTS. COLLECTED ACROSS TIME TO GUARD THIS PLACE FOREVER.
BY SHATTERING OUR SIGIL, YOU CALLED US. BY YOUR NEED YOU DREW OUR SPIRITS FROM THE GRAVE.
DON'T FEAR US. PERHAPS YOU'LL JOIN US WHEN THE TIME COMES.
YOU'RE A GOOD MAN, FRANK DRAKE. YOU DO NECESSARY WORK.
BUT DON'T CLOSE YOUR HEART TO MIRACLES.
FRANK?

FRANKY! WAKE UP!
COME ON! THEY'RE GONE, WE'VE GOT TO GET OUT OF HERE.
MY LEG! IT'S NOT BROKEN!
I NOTICED.
I THOUGHT THAT PUNCH GRANULATED MY JAW BUT I'M OKAY, TOO.
WHATEVER HAPPENED, LOOKS LIKE WE'RE THE ONLY ONES LEFT.
NO...I DON'T THINK WE ARE...
MOVE IT, FRANKY. WE'VE STILL GOT THE FALLEN TO FINISH UP WITH.
YOU KNOW, LIKE HANSEL AND GRETEL. I NOTCHED THE DOORWAYS SO I'D KNOW WHERE I'VE BEEN.
I LEFT A TRAIL OF BREAD CRUMBS THIS TIME.
DO YOU KNOW HOW WE GET OUT OF HERE?
BREAD CRUMBS?
CAREFUL, FRANKY. SOMEONE'S OUT THERE.

BLADE?!
KING?!
THESE DAYS IT DOESN'T HURT TO BE CAUTIOUS, HANNIBAL.
FRANK?! LAST I HEARD YOU WERE BURIED IN A CAVE-IN!
IT'S A LONG STORY...
SAVE IT! THERE'S NO TIME!
THE BATTLE AGAINST THE FALLEN GOES REALLY BADLY! IF YOU TWO WANT TO SIT IT OUT, I UNDERSTAND--
--BUT I'VE GOT TO GET BACK TO IT--
MISS IT?! A SNOWBALL'S CHANCE OF THAT! IF ONE OF US IS IN IT, WE'RE ALL IN IT!
THE END.